



# Integrated Country Strategy

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## Algeria

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## 1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The United States and Algeria enjoy a long-standing partnership based on shared interests of security, stability, democracy, and economic prosperity. Algeria is a reliable, capable, and strategic partner in the Middle East and North Africa region, and Embassy Algiers is dedicated to preserving and strengthening this partnership. Embassy Algiers pursues three broad mission goals in its relations with Algeria:

- Enhance domestic security capacity and promote regional cooperation to combat instability.
- Push Algeria to adopt transparent regulations to promote economic diversification, encourage growth, and facilitate increased U.S. exports and business.
- Strengthen relationships with civil society to build understanding of the United States and its values and to support political reforms to encourage democratic processes and good governance.

Algeria is the largest country by area in Africa with the second largest population in the Arab world and a growing middle class. It is a country in transition, moving from years of isolation and self-sufficiency that marked its decade-long battle against terrorism in the 1990s, to a more open posture. A newly elected government in December 2019, after twenty years of autocratic rule, may present opportunities for U.S. engagement. As Algeria continues to evolve, the country's significant political and economic challenges will require additional U.S. government resources to support its reform efforts, offset Chinese and Russian malign influence, and contribute to regional stability. While Algeria is a regional security leader, we would like to see it take an even more active role in promoting counterterrorism and stability in the Maghreb and Sahel regions and exporting good practices to its neighbors facing growing extremist threats. Algeria relies heavily on its hydrocarbon resources, and a sustained drop in energy prices and domestic oil and gas production means it needs to diversify its economy to protect its long-term prosperity and stability. Algeria faces additional financial turmoil as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, adding to the urgency of implementing critical financial reforms. Finally, Algeria's bulging youth demographic is increasingly seeking exposure to the United States, and U.S. engagement through English language, cultural, and educational programming is in high demand.

We are pleased that Algeria has taken a more active role regionally. The Algerian government recognizes that instability in Libya, and the accompanying power vacuum, as well as Algeria's long and porous desert borders with Libya, Niger, and Mali present continuing security threats. Algeria has chaired a group of international participants that continue to mediate the inter-Malian dialogue in search of a viable solution to the conflict in Mali. Algeria also supports UN efforts to mediate a diplomatic solution to the Libyan conflict. Furthermore, Algeria has collaborated with Tunisia, Niger, and other countries in the region to combat smuggling, weapons proliferation, and the presence of violent extremist groups. Algeria's engagement will also be necessary to resolve fully the Western Sahara conflict. Algeria supports a UN-led political process, and provides humanitarian support for the Sahrawi refugees residing in the refugee camps outside Tindouf in

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southwestern Algeria. Given the regional security challenges outlined in the NEA Joint Regional Strategy, Algeria remains an important leader and partner for greater security, stability, prosperity, and moderation.

While security cooperation is an important component of our bilateral relationship, our economic, diplomatic, and political partnerships have deepened substantially. As a key oil and gas supplier to Europe, Asia, and the Americas, Algeria plays a critical supply role in helping to stabilize global markets. The Algerian government is eager to expand partnerships with U.S. businesses that have a wealth of experience in this sector and began significant reforms in 2020 to enable international oil companies to directly invest in exploration and production activities, though the investment climate remains challenging. American companies remain successful and often the preferred suppliers to the Algerian market.

Despite these advances in cooperation, challenges remain that could complicate our relationship and make engagement efforts more difficult. In an era of declining oil prices, the Algerian government has continued to depend on oil and gas revenues despite stagnating hydrocarbon production. Its lack of economic diversification threatens future economic growth, and the increase in domestic energy demand further threatens Algeria's ability to be a reliable supplier of energy to international markets. In addition, a smothering bureaucracy accompanied by complicated and constantly shifting regulatory hurdles discourages foreign investment that would assist economic diversification. The need for more predictable rule of law, greater transparency, and more accountability in government institutions complicates U.S. government efforts to attract more American investment and dissuades public inclusiveness and participation. Though President Abdelmajid Tebboune has proposed economic reforms, the restructuring of the Algerian economy will take time and his proposal are limited in nature. Additionally, the government places restrictions on civil society organizations that prevent them from engaging more effectively in dialogue with the government.

Faced with these challenges, we see several opportunities to increase collaboration with the Algerian government and people while furthering U.S. interests. The Mission will continue to leverage existing programs and expand them where funding is available and Algerian demand exists. Human capital remains a powerful asset here, and we pushed for more competitive wages for our LE Staff. In FY 2021, the Bureau granted an average wage increase of 8% for our LE staff. We will continue seeking additional USDH positions in our drive to achieve mission goals.

A strong and capable partner in the global fight against terrorism, Algeria is an active leader in the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). To further assist the government in its counterterrorism efforts and to promote regional stability, we will implement effective programming and expand bilateral and multilateral cooperation. We continue to engage our counterparts about the volatile situation in Libya and Mali, as well as the threat of returned foreign fighters from Syria and Iraq. Law enforcement agencies at Post and regionally will work to deepen partnerships and facilitate training and exchanges aimed at building capacity in identifying and interdicting terrorists and combating

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terrorist financing, money laundering, trafficking, and organized crime. Positively, Algeria leads efforts to denounce payment of kidnapping for ransom (KFR) and further cooperation in this realm will promote compliance with international efforts to combat terrorism.

In the coming four years, we will deepen our security, law enforcement, military, and justice sector partnerships through training and exchanges. With the goal of strengthening our law enforcement cooperation and increasing information sharing, we will continue to encourage bilateral engagements and exchanges that are paramount to improving Algerian effectiveness at combating regional security threats, such as narcotics and arms trafficking, as well as financial and cyber-crimes. In line with these goals, the Mission will promote training to develop the Algerian justice sector's ability to investigate and prosecute related crimes within the rule of law. Current U.S.-Algeria military-to-military endeavors will further develop the capacity and professionalization of Algerian security forces while increasing U.S. defense trade. Per the Department of State's Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Implementation Plan, the Mission will lead by example through diplomatic engagement, public diplomacy, and programs in targeted contexts, to signal WPS as a priority.

Complementing these efforts, the Mission will engage the Algerian government in promoting increased collaboration and information sharing with international partners. We hope that greater communication, exchanges, and trainings with regional partners will improve Algeria's effectiveness in responding to shared security concerns and cross border terrorist threats in the Maghreb and Sahel.

In furtherance of our goal to promote regional stability, the Mission will enhance efforts to encourage Algeria to continue adopting simplified and transparent regulations to diversify its hydrocarbon-based economy. By helping the Algerian government reduce the regulatory barriers that discourage foreign investment in the economy, we hope to facilitate market diversification and growth in private sector-led job creation. A more attractive regulatory climate will encourage increased U.S. investment and partnerships with Algerian counterparts in the safe development of shale gas and other nontraditional and renewable energy sources, thereby broadening Algeria's economy. These combined endeavors will help ensure Algeria continues to be a reliable energy supplier to world markets. We will also focus efforts on facilitating Algeria's adoption of economic reforms that will promote private sector development and can eventually pave the way for Algeria's long-delayed accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Despite the 2019 change in government, the most delicate part of our Mission remains the promotion of democratic principles, good governance, transparency, and respect for civil liberties and human rights. Algeria held a constitutional referendum in 2020 which passed with a meager 24% voter turnout – an indication of the increasing public apathy towards the government. Civil society and opposition groups felt excluded from the constitutional reform process, and many decided to boycott the vote. Supporting local organizations to advocate for rule of law, transparency, and inclusive political participation will help create a more robust civil society and accountable government. As public mistrust in the government continues to rise, an improved

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relationship with civil society will be critical to enhancing the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the Algerian people. We will continue to engage both the government and civil society to promote a continuous and open dialogue that will lead to mutual trust.

Complementing our endeavor to encourage greater foreign investment and cooperation between the Algerian government and civil society, we will expand our promotion of English language education and further develop exchange opportunities for Algerians to study in the United States and experience first-hand successful best practices. Through active public diplomacy engagement and Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) grants, we will foster a better understanding of democratic principles, common values, and increased public awareness of and respect for human rights. Through UN partners, we will continue to support assistance and protection for Sahrawi refugees in Algeria. The Mission will work with both the government and the people as they progress in negotiating, adopting, and implementing reforms that will strengthen Algeria's long-term stability and its capabilities as a regional leader in a very challenging environment.

## **2. Mission Strategic Framework**

**Mission Goal 1:** Promote regional security cooperation to bolster stability, advance political solutions to regional crises and decrease transnational threats.

**Mission Objective 1.1:** Work in coordination with Algerian security forces to disrupt and dismantle terrorist networks and improve domestic and regional stability.

**Mission Objective 1.2:** Algeria modernizes its security sector and reduces internal and external security threats through increased military cooperation, training, and exchanges with U.S. military, law enforcement, and justice sector counterparts.

**Mission Objective 1.3:** Algeria improves its security collaboration and information sharing with regional and international partners, including institutions like AFRIPOL and other multilateral organizations, to increase its operational effectiveness in combating security threats.

**Mission Objective 1.4:** Protect America's borders by facilitating legitimate cross-border travel, streamlining visa procedures and processing, improving communication with non-U.S. citizen travelers to the United States, and combating fraud.

**Mission Goal 2:** Algeria develops an enabling business environment that promotes U.S. investment opportunities.

**Mission Objective 2.1:** Algeria facilitates growth in equitable, stable, private sector-led job creation.

**Mission Objective 2.2:** Algeria eases bureaucratic hindrances to facilitate economic diversification, greater U.S. investment opportunities, market access for U.S. companies to the

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Algerian market, both in terms of imports and local production and sharing of international technology and expertise.

**Mission Goal 3:** Algeria increases civil society participation and maintains open dialogue with civic organizations to strengthen the democratic process and promote good governance.

**Mission Objective 3.1:** Algeria reforms its NGO law, permitting civil society organizations to register and operate in a fully transparent fashion and promote a reduction in Algerian government constraints on civil society, maintaining a continuous and open dialogue with organizations.

**Mission Objective 3.2:** The Algerian people enjoy greater exposure to American culture and values, fostering greater bilateral understanding and appreciation of democratic principles, such as transparency and an active civil society.

**Mission Goal 4:** Protect safety and security of U.S. citizens and embassy personnel residing in Algeria.

**Mission Objective 4.1:** Continuously improve Post's disaster response and crisis management plans to respond to changing circumstances. Enhance the knowledge, technical capacity, and expertise of Algerian authorities to mitigate and respond to emergencies and disasters.

**Mission Objective 4.2:** Engage the Algerian government in easing U.S. diplomats' travel restrictions when providing consular services to U.S. citizens in Algeria.

**Management Objective:** Accelerate the transition to a family Post including addressing changing housing requirements, supporting the American International School, and supporting the needs of families as they arrive at Post.

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### 3. Mission Goals and Objectives

**Mission Goal 1: Promote regional security cooperation to bolster stability, advance political solutions to regional crises and decrease transnational threats.**

**Description and Linkages:** This supports the first pillar of the 2017 National Security Strategy to protect the American people, dismantle transnational criminal organizations, and pursue threats to their source to stop terrorists before they reach American borders. It also supports the USAID Middle East Regional Goal 1.3 and NEA Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) Goals 3.2 and 3.3 to enhance regional and civilian security, and to build stronger partnerships and regional security frameworks to prevent, mitigate, and respond to conflicts, crises, and terrorism. It also supports NEA JRS 3.4 to develop more effective justice sector institutions.

**Mission Objective 1.1: Work in coordination with Algerian security forces to disrupt and dismantle terrorist networks and improve domestic and regional stability.**

**Justification:** U.S. interests are best served when Algeria as a key security partner can identify, interdict, investigate, and prosecute terrorists in ways consistent with international financial standards, rule of law, and human rights. Algeria needs to improve its legal framework to enhance financial controls to counter terrorism and exhibit leadership in international fora. Cultural, political, and legal issues impede efficient intelligence, evidence, and information exchange with the United States. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include the persistence of terrorist threats that affect the security of the U.S. homeland and allies, as well as cross border terrorism that raises the prospect of instability in the region.

**Mission Objective 1.2: Algeria modernizes its security sector and reduces internal and external security threats through increased military cooperation, training, and exchanges with U.S. military, law enforcement, and justice sector counterparts.**

**Justification:** Algeria's law enforcement and judicial sector services face an evolving and increasingly complex threat environment. U.S. technical experts can help them more effectively detect and disrupt terrorist and criminal networks and investigate and prosecute terrorist and criminal cases. GOA personnel need training in interagency coordination and more opportunities to exchange information and benefit from the experience of U.S. counterparts. In line with NEA Bureau-specific commitments to the Department of State's 2020 Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Implementation Plan, Algeria should promote increased women's participation in justice and security sectors.

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**Mission Objective 1.3: Algeria improves its security collaboration and information sharing with regional and international partners, including multilateral institutions like AFRIPOL, to increase its operational effectiveness in combating security threats.**

**Justification:** Algeria needs international cooperation to combat terrorism, extremism, and transnational crime. Its counterterrorism expertise, military capability, and diplomatic experience also need to be leveraged to promote greater regional coordination. By strengthening Algeria's leadership in regional institutions, they will contribute to regional stability and the prevention of and response to terrorist attacks that threaten U.S. interests in Africa.

**Mission Objective 1.4: Protect America's borders by facilitating legitimate cross-border travel, streamlining visa procedures and processing, improving communication with non-U.S. citizen travelers to the United States and combating fraud.**

**Justification:** There is no higher priority than the safety of our fellow citizens at home. Consular professionals in Algiers have the sole authority to adjudicate passport and visa applications for travel to the United States. Closely reviewing each application allows us to ensure that the most coveted travel documents are kept out of the hands of those wanting to do harm to the United States. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include the persistence of terrorist threats that impact the security of the U.S. homeland and allies as well as cross border terrorism that raises the prospect of instability in the region.

**Mission Goal 2: Algeria develops an enabling business environment that promotes U.S. investment opportunities.**

**Description and Linkages:** This reflects the President's National Security Strategy second pillar, to promote American prosperity by reforming economic systems towards market-friendly policies that help American workers prosper, protect American innovation, break down trade barriers, and address persistent trade imbalances. It also supports the NEA Joint Regional Strategy Goals 1.1-1.4 to create equitable economic growth, job creation, and open markets. This also is in line with USAID Middle East Regional Goals 1.6 and 1.7 to create an environment more conducive to promote investment, and private sector growth. Encouraging economic diversification, open markets, and growth in the Algerian private sector will provide more employment opportunities for Algerians leading to greater economic stability, better investment opportunities for American companies, and a stronger market for American exports. Given Algeria's significant hydrocarbon resources, these economic policies will also contribute to ensuring a reliable supply of energy products from the MENA region.

**Mission Objective 2.1: Algeria facilitates growth in equitable, stable, private sector-led job creation.**

**Justification:** Employment is currently dominated by the GOA and state-owned companies. Private sector job growth is necessary to reduce the high-level of youth unemployment, increase economic stability, and diversify Algeria's economy. Economic diversification remains a main focus of the Algerian

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government, though reform has been slow. Algeria's finances have suffered due to the country's continued heavy reliance on hydrocarbons even during a period of sustained low oil prices, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Developing other potential sectors such as agriculture, health, construction, telecommunications, and transportation will be essential to maintaining economic stability. Improved youth and female economic empowerment is also critical to Algeria's economic stability. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include the persistence of economic volatility, an increasingly discouraging environment for foreign investment, and greater potential for political instability.

**Mission Objective 2.2: Algeria eases bureaucratic hindrances to facilitate economic diversification, greater U.S. investment opportunities, market access for U.S. companies to the Algerian market, both in terms of imports and local production, and sharing of international technology and expertise.**

**Justification:** Lengthy and difficult bureaucratic processes, a cumbersome regulatory framework, restrictive investment policies, inefficient customs, unreliable supply chains and inconsistent regulatory enforcement are often cited as hindrances to foreign investment. Improving the investment and regulatory frameworks are essential for creating an attractive climate for foreign direct investment and to facilitate increased U.S. exports that will promote economic diversification and growth. Risk associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include the persistence of economic instability and prospect of instability in the region.

**Mission Goal 3: Algeria reforms its NGO law to increase civil society participation and maintains open dialogue with civic organizations to strengthen the democratic process and promote good governance.**

**Description and Linkages:** This reflects the first and fourth pillars of the National Security Strategy to protect the American way of life, and to advance American influence through promoting a world that reflects American values, and commitment to liberty, democracy, and the rule of law. It also supports Joint Regional Strategy for NEA Goals 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 to expand democracy and good governance and engage civil society. In addition to reflecting USAID Middle East Regional Goals 1.1 and 1.2, this goal also bolsters the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Act of 2017 and the 2020 Department of State's Implementation Plan for WPS. An effectively reformed NGO law would empower civil society to represent societal interests, constructively engage in policymaking, and hold the government accountable. It could also contribute to greater respect for human rights, therefore fostering political stability.

**Mission Objective 3.1: Algeria reforms its NGO law, permitting civil society organizations to register and operate in a fully transparent fashion and promote a reduction in Algerian government constraints on civil society, maintaining a continuous and open dialogue with organizations.**

**Justification:** Algerian civil society faces an array of obstacles to its growth, among them its lack of experience, limited cooperation, and restricted international engagement. The current Law of Associations also greatly inhibits civil society's ability to develop. The new constitution includes provisions that protect associations from being dissolved except by order of a judge, guarantees freedom of expression, and permits freedom of association and public assembly. The legal system,

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however, still does not require the Ministry of Interior to respond to registration applications, leaving many organizations in perpetual limbo. NGOs would benefit if the law was modified to make NGO registration approval quicker and the process more transparent, in addition to allowing more efficient avenues for legal funding to these organizations. U.S. training programs can promote civil society's capacity and facilitate independent growth. As civil society leaders are able to learn how to better organize, promote, and direct organizations, their associations will become more active, inclusive, and effective. With this development, Algerian civil society can push for a greater voice in society and government, which would allow for the emergence of new partners for both the GOA and the United States. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include a weakened civil society and persistent distrust between the society and the Algerian government, that could potentially lead to political instability.

**Mission Objective 3.2: The Algerian people enjoy greater exposure to American culture and values, fostering greater bilateral understanding and appreciation of democratic principles such as transparency and an active civil society.**

**Justification:** Due to a lack of contact between Americans and Algerians, Algerian officials often note the lack of strong mutual understanding between the two peoples. Through public diplomacy engagement, the United States can provide a keenly interested audience with opportunities to better understand the U.S. government and American people. There is great interest in and potential for expansion of outreach in English language training, educational exchange programs, and cultural opportunities that allow Algerians to discover aspects of America. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include the threat to the values of democracy - including a vibrant and active civil society - that may lead to greater instability in Algeria.

**Mission Goal 4: Protect safety and security of U.S. citizens and embassy personnel residing in Algeria.**

**Description and Linkages:** This reflects the first and fourth pillars of the President's National Security Strategy to protect the American way of life, and to advance American influence through promoting a world that reflects American values, and commitment to liberty, democracy, and the rule of law.

**Mission Objective 4.1: Continuously improve Post's disaster response and crisis management plans to respond to changing circumstances. Enhance the knowledge, technical capacity, and expertise of Embassy personnel and Algerian authorities to mitigate and respond to emergencies and disasters.**

**Justification:** U.S. citizens rely on their Embassy for information about country conditions and guidance when they need help. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include putting U.S. citizens in Algeria at risk of harm during a disaster or emergency.

**Mission Objective 4.2: Engage the Algerian government in easing U.S. diplomats' travel restrictions when providing consular services to U.S. citizens in Algeria.**

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**Justification:** Currently, all diplomats are required to get local government permission to travel outside of the wilaya of Algiers. This procedure limits the consular section's response time when dealing with emergencies outside of Algeria. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include the inability of Embassy Algiers to conduct work related to the protection of U.S. citizens in Algeria putting U.S. citizens at risk of harm.

## **4. Management Objectives**

**Management Objective:** Accelerate the transition to a family Post including addressing changing housing requirements, supporting the American International School and supporting the needs of families as they arrive at Post.

**Justification:** Post returned to fully accompanied status in July 2017 for the first time in 24 years. Additionally, Embassy Algiers is no longer a Danger Pay Post. As a result, Post has welcomed the return of families and re-opened the American International School of Algiers.

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